In regard to Mr. Paramesvaran Pillai's gloomy representation, may I just say that the eye sees that which it brings with itself the power of seeing? In the long catalogue of woes that he read out, he sees nothing but an effort to exclude, humiliate and discredit the Nair. Let him not think that this is the case. Self-pity is a thing that practically every human being, at a certain stage of his life, passes through. Literature is full of instances of such characters who sit down and brood over their wrongs, and do nothing and advance no further and attain nothing. It is, I am afraid, a state of communal Wertherism that Mr. Paramesvaran Pillai has been passing through this morning. Let me beg of him not to indulge in it. It is an unhealthy state.

As regards the individual cases he has mentioned, if he will come to me some day, or any of you, one by one, will come to me, I can show you that during these eight months there is not one instance in which any of these appointments has been made with any sinister or ulterior motive; but all have been made with one sole object in view—what I, in my limited way, considered to be the best interests of everybody. Occasionally it may be necessary to make a cruel sacrifice upon the altar of efficiency, but that must be done if we are to exalt efficiency and pay due homage to that great quality which alone will make our public service worth its name. That does not mean that the man selected is the only efficient one and the others are inefficient. It may happen in all the circumstances of the case that the one selected is the best suited for that particular post.

There is very little left for me to show you what my attitude of mind is. I hope you have judged me correctly as you were all in a position to judge me during the past eight months, and particularly during the most valuable educative session we are just now having. I have never hidden anything from you. I can but assure you of complete fair-mindedness to everyone, be he Nair or be he Christian, Pulaya or Brahmin. To me one and all are exactly the same. It will be my most earnest effort to see that not one community suffers from a sense of wrong. That sense of wrong is a canker which eats into the loyalty, the patriotism and good feeling of the people and of the community. The man who suffers from a sense of wrong shuts out the realities of life, the man who broods over his wrong lives in an unwholesome atmosphere and feels that he is a martyr, a martyr who has been sacrificed. Once before I expressed the same sentiment. I think it was when speaking to the Malayala Brahmins soon after I came here. I hope that as time goes on the Nairs will realise that the Government are not deliberately and wantonly hurting their feelings, deliberately and cruelly shutting them out from appointments or trying to trample upon a great and patriotic community. You will no doubt say that I have held out no concrete promises to you; I have not listed the appointments which will be ear-marked for Nairs and Nairs alone. Do not expect that of me, because that I will not do—not for the Nair—not for the Christian—not for the Ezhava—not for any community. Each man must take his chance when the opportunity comes. If and when the opportunity comes, if he is fit for it, he will get it; if somebody else is better fitted, he will get it. But justice founded on a close study of the needs of the country and, as I said, on the prime consideration of efficiency, these will be my guiding principles.

I am very, very, grieved that for the first time during this Assembly a personal note was so persistently struck by Mr. Paramesvaran Pillai. Many of the officers whom he has shown as wronged or injured, will, I am perfectly sure, be themselves the very first to deny that that was done to them by the Government.

170. Suggestions for the improvement of the Public Service.

MR. T. K. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Member, Trivandrum taluk, Group I*) said that, notwithstanding the frequent references made in the proceedings of the Government to resolutions passed by the Legislative Council and to the representations made at the several sessions of the Assembly, the decisions of the Government were not anything other than arbitrary or based perhaps on the stereotyped opinion of the heads of the various bureaus. The tradition had established itself in Travancore that promotions should be based on the inelastic rule

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of seniority. The result was that the higher officers were almost always men who had risen from the ranks and were therefore by training devoid of initiative. They looked upon the existing administrative methods as models of perfection. They were capable at their periods of advancing age only of routine work. The Dewans were so overworked that they had to accept the half-truths placed before them by these heads of departments.

There was no State where the experiment of departmental re-organisation was made so often, and so infructuously, as in Travancore. The changes effected in the constitution of the Education Department, the Police Department and the Excise Department were cited in illustration. The possibilities of patronage was one of the main reasons which weighed with the heads of departments in demanding a re-organisation of their departments. That was the case with the reform of the Public Works Department. The additions and alterations to the panel of clerks, Superintendents and Secretaries in the Huzur Office were also cast in a similar mould. As was pointed out by Mr. T. Kumara Pillai in the course of a budget debate in the Legislative Council in 1098, the money spent on these superfluous appointments was clearly a waste of public funds. Mr. N. Ramakrishna Pillai also said that the administration was top-heavy. The late Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai who worked on the Government Press Committee said that by a careful and judicious application of the pruning knife the percentage of salaries to the revenues could be cut down by 7 or more. Mr. John Nidiry pointed out that the Dewan Peishkars and the Commissioner, Devicolam, might very well disappear and referred to the amalgamation of the Sanitary and Medical Departments. Mr. Kunjitomman complained against the system which resulted in the expenditure of Rs. 75 lakhs on the salaries and allowances of officers. In fact, all prominent Members of the Council on the non-official side had expressed themselves emphatically against maintaining an unnecessary number of officers. Retrenchment in the public service had become a permanent problem and the people would not be satisfied with the *ipse dixits* of the heads of departments. The whole question had therefore to be considered by a competent committee of capable officials and non-officials.

The system of taxation obtaining in the State was unsatisfactory in many respects. The imposition of taxes on the cocoanut palm and the jack tree was primitive. A re-settlement was bound to double the land revenue. But if the present revenues were found sufficient to meet the expenditure, additional taxation should not be resorted to. Even if more money was required, it would be forthcoming by a revision of the interportal convention and by the levy of a light export duty on rubber, tea and other articles. The forest revenue was also bound to increase. Dewan Mr. Raghaviah had promised the appointment of a committee of ways and means. It never took shape. The Government were not in the habit of consulting the Legislative Council and the Assembly on the question of taxation and the Government, without any consideration whatsoever as to the incidence, enhanced taxes on the recommendations of their departmental heads. There was no public question so important as taxation and no Government which imposed taxes without the consent of the subjects could be called a constitutional Government. A comprehensive scheme bearing on these matters was necessary and the drawing up of it should be one of the important functions of the committee.

The work of the Development Department should be properly scrutinised. These departments were changing their maxims and methods too frequently. There was no proper means of ascertaining the real value of their work. Enquiry into this matter should also be an item of work of the committee proposed. If a committee to perform these functions were to be appointed, the Member assured that great benefit was sure to accrue to the State. If the committee appointed functioned properly, its findings would form the basis of a steady administrative advance.

DEWAN'S RPLY: Mr. Padmanabha Pillai, you told us that you were going to offer suggestions for the improvement of the public service. I have heard for a quarter of an hour an interesting retrospect; I have listened to a certain amount of dogmatic criticism and a few unsupported statements and I have heard something about committees. Perhaps, I shall have to wait for the next session for the suggestions.

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